

I am most appreciative of the time that I have had in this august Chamber. I walked in and saw Billy Pitts and Bob Michel, and friends who served with me during that time, and it was a real throwback and took me back to some great memories. I felt like running up to Billy and saying, how long is this going to last? When are we going to catch the plane back home?

So thank you very much for honoring me. I join a distinguished list of people that were named in receiving this honor and I am greatly honored, and will display this plaque in a very prominent place in my office and remember fondly my days here in this House of Representatives and my association with so many of you. Thank you.

Mr. BUECHNER. Again, Dan, thank you for your service and your leadership during some challenging times.

Mr. Speaker, the Members of the association were honored and proud to serve in the United States Congress. We are continuing our service to the Nation in other ways now, but hopefully, ones that are equally effective. Again, thank you for letting us return today to this Chamber that means so much to us.

This concludes our 35th annual report by the U.S. Association of former Members of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Slattery.) The gentleman from Maryland would like to be recognized (Mr. HOYER).

Mr. HOYER. I asked my dear, dear friend of a long time, Speaker Michel, glad to have you here. You former Members, I want you to know that at one point in time I went up to RAY LAHOOD in 1995. I would particularly like my Republican friends to hear this. I went up to RAY LAHOOD, who was presiding in 1995. I went up to him and I said, look, we have got 197 Democrats, and if you could just get 20 Republicans, we will elect Bob Michel speaker. But LAHOOD could not deliver, Bob. I do not know what happened.

But I always like the opportunity to come and visit with those of you who have served so well in this Congress and provided for us such an outstanding institution in which to serve. It is a little more acrimonious than when most of you served here. Perhaps that will, at some point in time, get better. But in any event, on behalf of all of us who still serve here and who have benefited by what you have done through the years, thank you very much. And I hope that you have had a great visit back.

We see you often. I see Bob on a very regular basis, but I hope that all of you are doing well. Thank you for your assistance through the years. Thank you very much.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Thank you, Mr. President. The Chair again wishes to thank the former Members of Congress for their presence here today. And for those of you who have not had an opportunity to record your presence

with the Clerk, I would invite you to do so at this time. Good luck to all of you.

The Chair would advise that the House will reconvene at approximately 10:35.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 20 minutes a.m.), the House continued in recess.

□ 1030

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN) at 10 o'clock and 35 minutes a.m.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS HAD DURING RECESS

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the recess be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and that all Members and former Members who spoke during the recess have the privilege of revising and extending their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will receive up to 10 one-minute speeches on each side.

END FILIBUSTER AGAINST PRISCILLA OWEN

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, throughout her career, Judge Priscilla Owen has received support from across the ideological spectrum. In 2000 she was overwhelmingly reelected to a second term on the Texas Supreme Court, receiving 84 percent of the vote. Every major newspaper in Texas endorsed her for election.

Her popularity stems from her excellence on the bench and in private practice where she distinguished herself as a litigator after earning the highest score in the State on the Texas bar exam in 1977.

On May 9, 2001, Priscilla Owen was nominated to the Fifth Circuit Court. The nomination is supported by three former Democrat judges on the Texas Supreme Court, a bipartisan group of 15 past presidents of the State Bar of Texas. However, on five separate occasions in the U.S. Senate, Democrats succeeded in blocking the vote on the floor, even though she has the votes to be confirmed, because of partisanship and politics.

Today political maneuverings stand and Judge Owen's courtroom stands

empty. Senate Democrats are holding qualified judges hostage to their extremist views and disrupting the constitutional process. That is wrong, unprecedented, and it should stop.

STOP THE WEAPONIZATION OF SPACE

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, the administration, through senior Air Force officials, wants the U.S. to achieve military supremacy in outer space. Dominating all earth from outer space will have an out-of-world price tag, perhaps more than \$1 trillion.

A question: Why reach for the stars with guns in our hands? Are there weapons of mass destruction on Mars?

Yesterday 28 Members of Congress signed on to H.R. 2420, a bill to stop the weaponization of space, urging the President to sign an international treaty to ban such weapons. If we work together towards creating peace on earth, we would not bring war to the high heavens.

While some fantasize about being "masters of the universe," there are 45 million Americans without health insurance. Corporations are reneging on pension obligations. Social Security is under attack. We are headed towards a \$400 billion annual budget deficit, a \$600 billion trade deficit, an \$8 trillion national debt. The cost of the war in Iraq is over \$200 billion. While we build new bases in Iraq, we close them in the United States.

Earth to Washington, D.C. Earth to Washington, D.C. D.C., call home.

ENSURING A STABLE VACCINE SUPPLY

(Mr. MURPHY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. Speaker, two quick health care issues. Each year vaccinations save \$52 billion in health care costs and 33,000 lives. However, the government's policy of selecting the lowest bidder, combined with a fear of lawsuits, has driven manufacturers out of the United States. This contributed to last year's flu vaccine shortage, where 30 million doses were lost due when a foreign manufacturer's supply was contaminated. The U.S. Congress needs to follow through with incentives to secure more U.S.-based vaccine manufacturers.

Secondly, today's news in the paper about Type II diabetes was disturbing. One point two million more cases appear per year, costing \$132 billion. Type II diabetes is caused by poor diet and lack of exercise, and as Members of Congress we need to urge all Americans to make sure they take better care of themselves for this disease that causes stroke, heart attack, kidney failure,

and blindness. The risks are huge. The costs are huge. The benefits are great if we take better care of ourselves.

SAVERS CREDIT

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, for millions of Americans their retirement has become less, not more, secure. Part of the problem is that we are not saving enough. Half of all Americans do not participate in employer-sponsored retirement plans, and for 28 million households they have no retirement plans outside of Social Security.

A savings crisis in America, combined with privatizing Social Security, is a recipe for disaster. As the collapse of the United Airlines pension demonstrates, Social Security is a key to retirement security for many Americans. We must preserve Social Security while we encourage Americans to save more for their retirement.

Here are four ideas: Automatic enrollment in 401(k)'s for all Americans; direct deposit of their tax refunds into their savings plans; government match for the first \$2,000 they save, matching it by 50 percent; and universal 401(k)'s to simplify and consolidate the 16 different tax savings plans on the tax rolls.

Mr. Speaker, a saving crisis faces America, but we can do something about it. We should act now to encourage more Americans to save for their retirement while strengthening Social Security, not privatizing it.

NASCAR

(Mr. HAYES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HAYES. Mr. Speaker, the State of North Carolina is a proud home to a great American racing tradition: NASCAR. This weekend Lowes Motor Speedway in Concord will host the NASCAR Nextel Cup All Star Race, and folks from all across the country and around the world will come to watch the world's best drivers race for the finish.

My hometown of Concord is proud of its partnership with the racing industry and is home to many NASCAR drivers and teams. The Charlotte area has also joined together to attract the NASCAR Hall of Fame. We are excited about the possibility of this prestigious attraction calling North Carolina home.

Today I would like to take a moment to commend NASCAR, a tremendous industry and job provider in North Carolina, for its efforts to give back to the community. With its growing popularity, the sport provides entertainment for families, support for charities, and a huge economic boost for our region. I am also especially grate-

ful for NASCAR's support of Dell TechKnow, a technology program for our schools. It is making an impact for kids in education. Even more important is NASCAR's support of our incredible military.

Tomorrow, May 20, I will join fans across the country celebrating NASCAR Day, which means support for numerous charities, our men and uniform, and jobs for Americans. NASCAR Day is an opportunity to bring fans, businesses, and community organizations across the Nation together for common cause while giving to NASCAR-related charities and making a difference in the lives of children. It supports charities such as Victory Junction Camp, Speediatrics, and Speedway Children's Charity, all meeting needs and providing support for children with chronic and life-threatening illnesses.

Mr. Speaker, I commend NASCAR, and if we ever add an extra line to the "Star Spangled Banner," it will be "Gentlemen, start your engines."

THE JUDICIARY AND THE RULE OF LAW

(Mr. MILLER of North Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MILLER of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, the presidential election in 2000 was effectively decided by the Supreme Court. In his dissent, Justice Stephens said: "It is the confidence in the men and women who administer the judicial system that is the true backbone of the rule of law . . . Although we may never know with complete certainty the identity of the winner of this year's presidential election, the identity of the loser is perfectly clear: It is the Nation's confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the rule of law."

Mr. Speaker, Americans, Democrats and Republicans alike did accept the Supreme Court's decision and the legitimacy of President Bush's election. But, Mr. Speaker, what confidence will Americans have in judges nominated without consultation, without the advice and consent that the Constitution provides for, and confirmed by a bare majority despite strong objections to the impartiality of those judges, confirmed only by shamelessly ignoring the rules that have governed the Senate for more than two centuries? Mr. Speaker, why should Americans accept the decisions of those judges as legitimate? And, Mr. Speaker, just what will be left of the rule of law?

COMMENDING SENATE FOR COURAGEOUS ACTION

(Mr. CARTER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CARTER. Mr. Speaker, the Constitution of the United States designed by our Founding Fathers set up a system of establishing a judiciary. And in

that establishment, they intended for the President of the United States to nominate people on the bench and they intended for the Senate to give advice and consent to that nomination and, by an up-or-down vote, vote on whether or not those people can serve for life in the United States judiciary.

□ 1045

We are seeing today a constitutional challenge that is being met by the Senate as they go forward and meet their constitutional duty for an up-or-down vote for the judiciary and the nominees that have been proposed for our Federal judiciary.

Mr. Speaker, we expect fair and impartial judges to be appointed to the court; and just because they do not meet our political litmus test, we should not allow anyone to intervene with our constitutional duty which we take an oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States as we have served in these offices.

I commend the Senate for the courageous act that they will go forward and do in the following weeks.

REPUBLICAN ABUSES OF POWER

(Ms. BERKLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, our Founding Fathers envisioned Congress would deliberate, collaborate, and then judiciously compromise on the key issues of the day. Here in the House, the Republican majority refuses to collaborate, deliberate, or compromise. The House leadership consistently abuses its power by preventing the minority from offering its ideas on the floor.

Fortunately, in the Senate, the Republican majority cannot force its will on the minority so easily. One of the tools of the Senate for more than 200 years is the filibuster, a rule that protects the rights of the minority and prevents the majority from having absolute power. It is a critical tool in the checks and balances that exist between the branches of government.

Today, Senate Republicans are preparing to do something that has never been done before: abolish the rights of the minority to filibuster judicial appointments.

This extreme power grab would seriously undermine our Nation's checks and balances. Like their colleagues in the House, Senate Republicans want absolute power, even though Americans know that our country works best when no political power is in absolute control.

As a Nevadan, I want to personally thank Nevada Senator HARRY REID for leading the fight in the Senate to protect and preserve the constitutional form of government that we enjoy in this country.